Movement Worries U.S.

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A Soviet guided-missile destroyer and a landing ship for tanks are steaming toward Angola, informed sources said last night.

The movement and capabilities of the two ships were being viewed with grave concern by Ford administration officials watching the fast-developing Angola situation.

The destroyer, sources said, is of the Kotlin class and was steaming southeast toward Angola from a position off the shore of Gabon. Sailing with the destroyer is a Soviet oiler so that the warship can be refueled before it reaches Angola.

Equally, if not more worrisome to U. S. officials last night was the presence of a Soviet ship off Congo which is capable of landing tanks, armored vehicles and troops.

This ship, informed sources said, has Soviet personnel aboard but how many there are and what their mission is had not been determined by officials poring over the intelligence reports.

At first glance it did not appear that there were tanks aboard the big ship, but the possibility that it is carrying Soviet assault troops was not excluded.

The position of this tank landing ship was described as near the Congo port of Pointe Noire. One possibility is that the ship could pick up armor at that port and deliver it to Soviet-backed forces in Angola further south.

As of last night, the big ship appeared to be sailing slowly toward Pointe Noire, possibly waiting for the guided-missile destroyer and the oiler to catch up to it before entering the port.

This naval force appeared headed toward Angola at the moment the Ford administration is trying to damp down the crisis and is expressing hope that the Soviets—as they hinted in a Pravda editorial Saturday—had decided to withdraw from Angola.

There is a chance, sources agreed, that the big assault ship might have the mission of withdrawing Soviet weaponry from Angola.

However, the same sources said that possibility appeared

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slim. Instead, analysts, in their initial interpretations, feared the Soviets were intending to escalate their military involvement.

The Kotlin class destroyer displaces 3,885 tons, is 414 feet long and carries guns as well as missiles.

Jane's Fighting Ships says Kotlin class destroyers carry twin batteries of anti-aircraft missiles.

The Soviet ships did not become of great concern to U. S. officials until late yesterday when the intelligence hardened that they were connected with Soviet support of forces in Angola.

By nightfall, however, the information about the ships was in the hands of top officials at the White House, State Department and Pentagon. There was no indication how the United States would react.

There are two American aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean, the U. S. S. Kennedy and the U. S. S. Independence, but none along the African coast where they could shadow the Soviet destroyer and assault ship. The Kennedy is in the Mediterranean and the Independence aircraft carrier was tied up at Naples as of yesterday, according to the Pentagon.